



The Vista

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May 2007

TF Wily aviators are local heroes

By Staff Sgt. Nfor Julio Barthson
Joint Task Force VISTA

Two good samaritans serving with Joint Task Force VISTA were recently added to San Diego's list of local heroes; after helping a woman involved in a serious accident. 2nd Lt. Joseph Burke and Sgt. Leonard Owings - both of them members of Task Force Wily - are still receiving congratulatory calls.

It all happened around the noon hours of Monday, April 9, near Balboa Avenue and the 163 freeway. Driving together on a normal duty day to an off-post assignment, they had no idea that what was about to happen would challenge them - both as professional Guardsmen and as concerned, compassionate citizens.

"It was totally unexpected," 2nd Lt. Burke said of the accident that happened right before their eyes, after they had stopped at an intersection. "We had the green light and we were getting ready to drive on when we saw two cars crash in a T-Bone collision. It was like a nose-to-nose collision, but at an angle..." he recalled.

"One of the cars flipped over and landed on the driver's side," Sgt. Owings added. "We immediately stopped our car because we were right behind one of the cars involved in the accident. We jumped out of our car, checked for oncoming traffic, and ran to the car that had overturned."



Photo by Army 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela

2nd Lt. Burke and Sgt. Owings, a strong working relationship makes them a reliable team. Their life-saving actions were coordinated and timely, leaving one woman very grateful that they were present in her hour of need.

That was when they noticed that the woman driving the car was still trapped in her seat. She seemed to be in what Sgt. Owings described as a "hysterical" state, as the car was lying on the driver's side, trapping her.

"Without any hesitation or second thought,"

2nd Lt. Burke told us, "Sgt. Owings grabbed the door while I assisted in lifting her out of the car, through the passenger door."

Both Soldiers noticed that the car's engine was still running, that there was some smoke rising from the front hood, and the odor of gas was be-

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EIT: Imperial Beach

By 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela
Joint Task Force VISTA

At around 1930, dusk falls with its last view along the Imperial Beach horizon. The fall of darkness does not mean close of business for the swing shift Entry Identification Team (EIT) posted on "the hill." On the radio, voices squawk numerical jargon. EIT NCOIC on this watch, Sgt. G., clarifies the call to be the radio code for local traffic activity being reported by border patrol agents in the lowlands below them. No sooner does he complete his sentence, the scope camera on board his vehicle reveals movement activity. "Sir, come check this out on my screen!", he exclaims. The beginning of darkness only means the work shift is just about to get more exciting.

The Imperial Beach EIT swing shift on the "hill" is comprised of personnel operating as a real world Listening Post/Observation Post (LP/OP) on any one of its many strategically designated guard mounts along the border by Joint Task Force VISTA. These LP/OPs work along side with U.S. Border Patrol.

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The Vista continually solicits news items, photographs and creative works that are relevant to members of JTF VISTA, OPERATION JUMP START and the Southwest Border Mission.

Materials may be submitted to the Public Affairs Office in person at either the El Centro or San Diego sector headquarters, or FISC Logistics Support Center, Coronado Island; or by email: Michael.R.Drake@us.army.mil.

Please call (619) 545-9897/9899 for more information. Deadline is the fifth of every month.

FROM THE DEPUTY COMMANDER

*Greetings from the new Deputy Commander,
Lt. Col. Gregory Clark.*

It is with great anticipation that I have returned to the San Diego area as part of the Command Group for JTF VISTA. For those who were not here in the beginning last summer, I started out the mission as the Executive Officer for JTF VISTA until October when I took command of TF EL CENTRO "Scorpions." I am extremely proud of the professional work that was accomplished by the leaders and staff in El Centro while I was the commander. I challenge them to continue that great work for their new commander, Maj. Craig Wells.

Many of you I am sure have found this mission both challenging and rewarding. As we continue the mission and prepare to start the realignment of the force to meet our strength for next fall, the key to success will be individuals who have multiple skills to support the mission. Example, if you are not currently assigned as an EIT, I encourage you to participate in the upcoming EIT Academy later this month to become EIT trained.

The San Diego area has been my family's home since 1991 and I have enjoyed it immensely. In your off duty time, take advantage of what San Diego, a world class travel destination, has to offer: the Zoo, Wild Animal Park, Sea World, the Beach, the Navy Golf Courses, plus much more!!!

In Support to Secure the Border, Lt. Col. Clark



Camp Morena troops renovate facilities

By Sgt. Rafael Yera
Joint Task Force VISTA

California's OPERATION JUMP START Commander, Col. Nate Reddicks, and his Deputy, Lt. Col. Gregory Clark, recently paid a visit to the Soldiers and Airmen of Camp Morena in San Diego County.

The unscheduled "meet-and-greet" took place on March 30, 2007 during noon hours. Col. Reddicks and Lt. Col. Clark met with the troops as they were working on the renovation of Camp Morena's barracks and office buildings.

According to Lt. Col. Clark, the renovation of Camp Morena's facilities is a joint mission involving the Army National Guard, the Air National Guard and the Navy. Once the renovation is completed, Camp Morena will be used as a joint services training facility.



Photo by Army Sgt. Rafael Yera

Col. Reddicks of JTF VISTA holds a casual conversation with task force servicemembers at Camp Morena, where National Guard and Navy personnel are involved in the renovation of barracks and office buildings.

After the short visit, Col. Reddicks expressed satisfaction with the outstanding job being conducted by the Soldiers and Airmen at Camp Morena.

Safety Stand Down at TF San Diego

JTFV Command Sgt. Maj. Gomez gives a motivational lecture on safety awareness at the safety stand down in El Cajon. Officers and enlisted Soldiers of the San Diego sector were all required to attend the refresher sessions.

By Staff Sgt. Nfor Julio Barthson
Joint Task Force VISTA

"When you see signs that something's getting bad, you better fix it before it gets completely broken."

These were the words of Task Force San Diego Commander, Maj. Gabriel Frumkin, as he personally supervised what was referred to as a "safety and security stand down" on Wednesday, March 28, 2007 at the El Cajon National Guard Armory.

The event was, in fact, a series of classes on operational safety and security in reaction to a series of unfortunate incidents in that domain over the past few months within the San Diego sector. From 4 a.m. to 9 a.m., and from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., TF San Diego officers and NCOs were summoned to two separate, mandatory blocks of instruction aimed at reminding them - especially those in leadership positions - of their responsibilities while serving on OPERATION JUMP START.

They underwent refresher classes on physical safety and security, operational security



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Nfor Barthson

and safeguarding sensitive items, guard mount procedures, GSA vehicle and green tactical vehicle safety procedures, thumb drive security and other matters of general safety. Even the JTF VISTA Commander and his Command Sergeant Major showed up at the stand down to talk directly to the troops, emphasizing the event's importance as an appropriate response to recent serious security mishaps.

"Corrective action is what we need right now," said Maj. Frumkin. "And that is what we're doing."

CSM WARNING

In a related development, Command Sgt. Maj. Jose Gomez summoned all JTF VISTA senior NCOs (pay-grade E-6 and above) in the San Diego sector to a "wake-up call" meeting

on Thursday, April 5. During the heated encounter in the Naval Base amphitheatre, he addressed the increase in security incidents. "We as NCOs are the backbone of any military organization," he reminded those in attendance. "It's a disgrace that we fail in following rules and in setting the right example, thereby letting our own soldiers and officers get away with inexcusable errors," he hammered.

He recalled some lapses in judgement he had witnessed while paying surprise visits to some Entry Identification Teams on duty. "We must stop being too comfortable on this mission and get back to work, or someone will be going back home soon!" the Senior Enlisted Advisor warned his NCOs.

Wily heroes (cont'd from pg.1)

coming stronger and stronger as they set to help her out. Their only priority at that moment was to pull her out to safety.

"My whole mind was focused on her," Sgt. Owings said, "I kept on repeating to myself, 'I hope she's okay... I hope she's okay.'"

"After we managed to get her out of the car, Sgt. Owings walked her to the side of the road and started reassuring her that she would be fine," 2nd Lt. Burke joined in. "Then we went back to the car, turned off the engine so as to prevent a possible delayed explosion, and secured her purse and cell phone."

The rescued accident victim told them that she

was returning from her lunch break and heading back to the office. The driver of the other car involved in the accident escaped unhurt. It turned out he was a retired Army colonel, who immediately recognized the bravery of our two Soldiers and congratulated them on the spot.

Second Lt. Burke and Sgt. Owings assured that all those involved in the accident had been brought to safety, and made sure a bystander placed a 911 call for emergency. They then took things further by helping to unlock the massive traffic jam caused by the accident. They helped direct oncoming traffic around the intersection to reduce the deadlock and clear the streets before heading back to their office, where they immediately reported the incident to their chain of command.

Besides serving on the border mission, 2nd Lt.

Burke belongs to HHC 3/140th Aviation, Security and Support (S&S) Battalion out of Stockton, and Sgt. Owings hails from A Company, 3/140th Aviation Detachment 1, S&S Battalion. Both of them volunteered for the mission in June of 2006, where the former serves as Logistics Officer and the latter as S-4 (Supply and Logistics) NCOIC for TF Wily.

Do they consider themselves heroes because of what they did on that day? "No, actually, I don't!" Sgt. Owings said emphatically. "There're so many people who do it regularly. I just did what I would want anyone else to do if I fell in the same situation. That is what a Soldier or any decent human being does."

Second Lt. Burke agreed: "We just happened to be at the right place at the right time," he said, in all modesty. "Nothing out of the ordinary..."

EIT:IMB

(cont'd from pg.1)



Sundown on the horizon of Imperial Beach marks the beginning of an EIT work day. Among their assets is their night scope.



Sgt. G. leads two other soldiers, Sgt. C. and Spc. W. Their mission, as defined by their core training, is to assist the Border Patrol in providing overwatch support, by assuming LP/OP sites traditionally assigned to agents. By doing so, more agents are available to perform traditional law enforcement duties, thereby allowing more badges back to the border.

To Spc. C., it's just a typical night. Having been on this mission since December of 2006, she has learned to appreciate a more rugged work place than she is used to as a finance specialist. Even with the sharp drop in temperatures after nightfall, Spc. C. has become so acclimated, she barely notices the chill.

They described their mission with three main points of focus. One obvious purpose of an EIT is to serve as supporting eyes and ears of an LP/OP operation. With their scope capabilities, three sets of eyes are in constant employment. The scope itself serves as one set, especially at nightfall, being able to identify movement with both night vision and infrared capabilities. Monitoring the scope and analyzing activations are the second set. The over watch support from each team member is the vital third set of eyes.

Deterrence, the most passive of their tasks, carries equal weight for being out there. An EIT site with no activity is just as successful as any other site employing a scope. Even on the most boring days, their visual presence is enough to thwart most would-be crossers' or traffickers' ambitions.

Watching the EIT sites perform is proof that the "badges to the border" concept works. It allows more border patrol agents to execute their law enforcement capacity while Soldiers and Airmen occupy overwatch positions.

Photos by Army 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela

Army War College "invades" southwest border

The Army War College scholars make a stop at TF Steel Castle area of operations, where they can get a good view of some major engineering and drainage enhancements near the border fence line.



By Staff Sgt. Nfor Julio Barthson
Joint Task Force VISTA

Photo by Army 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela

OPERATION JUMP START servicemembers in the San Diego sector were especially on their toes Monday, April 23, as they received a group of visitors from the U.S. Army War College. The war college students and faculty, who hail from all the military services, spent the day visiting various JTF VISTA operational sites, aiming to gain direct education of the southwest border mission from National Guard personnel on the ground.

The nine military scholars were led by Army Col. Michael Hoadley - a teacher of National Security Legal Studies and Faculty Director of the Eisenhower Series College Program at the U.S. Army War College, based in Carlisle Barracks, Penn. Col. Hoadley arranged the tour with JTF VISTA as part of the Eisenhower Series College Program (ESCP) for academic year 2007.

The group started with a stop at Task Force Willy

(Aviation) headquarters, North Island Naval Base, where they received a standard operational brief and update from Lt. Col. Stan Zezotarski, JTF VISTA J-3 Officer-in-Charge. There they learned that the main mission of JTF VISTA is to provide support to Border Patrol in securing 66 border miles in the San Diego sector and 90 miles in the El Centro area. They discussed how the En-

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Sgt. G. points at an activation of movement registering on his screen display. His other team members occupy the other vehicle and provide his necessary over watch support.



A typical view of an EIT day at work.

Photos by Army 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela

JTFV honors 100-year-old local legend



JTFV personnel: Master Sgt. Holly Amara, Sgt. Major Raymond Sweeney, and Sgt. 1st Class Frank Hatcher pose with Julio Aceves.

By 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela
Joint Task Force VISTA

Representing Air Force and Army respectively, Master Sgt. Holly Amara and Sgt. 1st Class Frank Hatcher presented the coveted Presidential Congratulatory Award, an esteemed recognition by the Commander-in-Chief, George W. Bush, himself, to local San Diego legend, Julio Aceves, for his lifetime achievement of one hundred years.

An official capital flag, sponsored by the La Mesa Police Dept., accompanied the award.

TFSD Sergeant Major Raymond Sweeney, a member of the La Mesa Police Dept. was key in coordinating the ceremony.

Julio Aceves served in the Army Air Corps Reserves from 1943 - 1945, and was mayor of La Mesa, 1958 - 1960. His great nephew, Edward Aceves is a captain in the LMPD.

JTFV in the News

By Master Sgt. Michael Drake
Joint Task Force VISTA

At a press conference held at Otay Lakes Park in April, Chief Patrol Agent Darryl Griffen credited National Guard involvement, along with that of other law enforcement agencies, CalTrans and the DMV, in effecting 4900 arrests of illegal aliens during a two-month period between mid-February and mid-April. Operation Block Island, set up at four checkpoints in the central corridor of San Diego sector, also netted 58 vehicles seized by Border Patrol agents. Of those taken into custody, 140 were arrested or suspected of possessing fraudulent driver's licenses or other identification, filing false documents to obtain licenses or other forms of identity theft. There were also 44 cases of smuggling and immigration crimes presented to the U.S. Attorney's Office for prosecution, along with individuals wanted for sexual assault on a minor, assault with a deadly weapon, or distribution of a controlled substance.

Griffen said it was the cooperation of the various agencies working together, along with the support of Soldiers and Airmen from Joint Task Force VISTA that made the operation a success. Similar operations are expected to continue, he said.



Photo by Army 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela

CPA Darryl Griffen presents success statistics to gathered media during an April press conference. In the background are JTFV Commander, Col. Nate Reddicks and CSM Jose Gomez.

USBP honors TFSD Soldiers for outstanding service



Top: Sgt. Veronica Salvador and Sgt. Ronald Ocampo pose with Chief Patrol Agent Darryl Griffen and Deputy Chief Michael Griffen.

Right: Sgt. Veronica Salvador and TFSD CSM Antone, Joseph accepting the award for Spc. Michael Murphy, receive congratulations from USBP staff.



Sgt. Ronald Ocampo accepts the Chief's Commendation Award from Chief Patrol Agent Darryl Griffen.

By 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela
Joint Task Force VISTA

On April 12, 2007, at U.S. Border Patrol Sector Headquarters, Chula Vista, Chief Patrol Agent, Darryl Griffen honored three TF San Diego Soldiers with individual USBP Chief's Commendation Awards for the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2007.

Sgt. Ronald Ocampo was recognized identifying a rifleman operating dangerously close to agents and Guardsmen along the U.S.-Mexico border. The other honorees were Spc. Michael Murphy and Sgt. Veronica Salvador, recognized for their efforts in providing immediate medical assistance to a person who was seriously injured during a paragliding accident.

The three TFSD Soldiers were recognized for their service, alongside other recipients, by Chief Griffen and his staff. They received certificates and the Chief's personal appreciation and congratulations.

Photos by Army 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela

JTFV conducts own pre-deployment SRP

By Staff Sgt. Nfor Julio Barthson
Joint Task Force VISTA

California National Guard Soldiers currently serving on OPERATION JUMP START at the southwest border did not have to travel all the way to Camp Roberts for administrative, medical and financial processing when they were selected for overseas deployments. In mid-April, Joint Task Force VISTA (JTFV) launched its first major state-mandated pre-deployment Soldier Readiness Program (SRP) in San Diego to evaluate Soldiers called to active duty.

The decision to conduct SRP in San Diego came as a result of discussions between the JTFV command and the Deputy State Surgeon's office. Conducting the SRP here saved Army Guard troops from having their active duty (ADSW) orders terminated. In the past, Soldiers' orders were amended to end before they were allowed to travel to Camp Roberts where seasoned SRP teams from OTAG, Camp San Luis Obispo and the 40th ID (M) in Los Alamitos would assess their medical, administrative and financial preparedness.

Staff Sgt. Paul Brand, the State Medical Services Branch Liaison for JTF VISTA, served as NCOIC for the medical SRP portion conducted by TF Phoenix at Naval Amphibious Base (NAB) Coronado. He said they faced some major challenges, though they accomplished the tasks with relative success.

"Our first major challenge was that of matching our reduced staff with the high number of soldiers," Staff Sgt. Brand said. "There was a staff of only 15



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Nfor Barthson

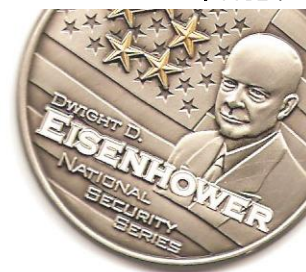
Army medical doctor, Lt. Col. Salvador Renteria, conducts an interview with a Soldier as part of the SRP process in San Diego. The SRP must meet standards set by the US Army.

medics for nearly 200 soldiers, but we still managed to complete the processing of 164 people by 4 p.m. on the second day - Thursday, April 12th."

To grasp the magnitude of their accomplishment, it should be noted that the SRP camp at Camp Roberts, through which the bulk of California National Guard Soldiers are usually processed before deployment overseas, normally has a staff of over fifty. Moreover, according to Staff Sgt. Brand, they maintained the same standards as those required at Camp Roberts or Ft. Lewis, Wash.

"For the most part, these Soldiers were healthy; and we assessed them using the highest standards," he said. "Those

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War College



War College students receive briefing of engineer projects along the US/Mexico fence line from TF Steel Castle commanderr, Maj. Nick Duchi.



Maj. Gabriel Frumkin, commander of TF San Diego, gives a field briefing to Army War College visitors at Border Field Park. A Mexican bull ring and parts of Tijuana can be seen in the backdrop across the border fence.



Photos by Army 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela

War College students receive briefing from RVSS authorized staff.

(cont'd from pg.4)

try Identification Teams (EITs), technological and mechanical support, engineering and construction work, and other miscellaneous duties by the Guard, were helping Border Patrol meet the challenges of preventing terrorism, drug smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal immigration.

JTF VISTA Commander, Col. Nate Reddicks, who stopped by to meet with the visitors at TF Wily Aviation, intervened occasionally to clarify the mission's objectives. "We provide the capabilities for Border Patrol to succeed, and that is our mission," he said. "The success of our mission will ultimately be measured by how much support we have provided to them so that they can concentrate on law enforcement activity at the border."

After stopping by the hangar to see some of the aviation assets employed in the mission, the group headed for Border Field State Park, a picturesque spot at the U.S.-Mexico border line where the importance of fence construction and maintenance could hardly be over-demonstrated. At this point, they could see a Mexican bull ring literally a stone's throw across the fence, a fact that made one of them remark, "I never imagined the other side could be so close."

Things seemed even closer when they arrived at the final stop, famously known as Arnie's Point. From there they could see a breathtaking view of the Mexican border city, Tijuana, right on the other side of a decades-old primary fence. The fact that the sprawling Mexican city is built so close to the demarcation line between both countries, made the national security risk utterly obvious to the War College students.

"I only just realized the complexity and magnitude of the problem with regards to fighting illegality of all forms here at the border," said Army Col. Clarence Turner, an engineer officer who served in the Joint Staff as an emergency actions officer before being admitted to the Army War College. "It's a really huge mission with tremendous possibilities, but it requires much more in terms of resources and a long commitment," he added solemnly.

The students also visited Task Force Steel Castle's area of operations to get short briefings and eyewitness record of what the engineers have accomplished. They saw the new secondary fence line that has already been added, the roads that have been constructed to enhance Border Patrol vehicular mobility along the border, and the tons of earth that have been moved from steep hills in order to build new road infrastructure.

"It is amazing to see how much has already been accomplished in less than one year," Marine Lt. Col. Daniel Elzie, himself a former engineer support commander, said at the end of the tour. "The engineers have done a wonderful job, and the coordination with Border Patrol seems to be excellent. It's a lot more than I would have expected," he told "The Vista" after a brief moment of reflection.

Most of the war college graduate students seemed to be very skeptical about the importance of the southwest border mission at the beginning of the tour, but their opinions and impressions seemed to evolve as they gained more education at every juncture during the visit. During one of the most informative briefings, at

the Remote Video Surveillance System (RVSS) facility in Chula Vista, they asked a lot of questions and reacted with amazement to some of the video recordings of illegal activity at the border.

Air Force Lt. Col. Kevin McElroy later shared his impressions with us: "I thought the RVSS setup and demonstration was fantastic; and it took my breath away to see just how easily illegal immigrants could by-pass our current border security structure if we do not provide more resources," he said. "We could probably do a lot better with more modern technology, to enhance the surveillance structure needed to secure our borders," he added.

He also noted, in agreement with the other officers, that most of the equipment used here was almost obsolete. Meanwhile, the country now has better technology that would enhance the success of such a vital mission - Homeland Security.

The U.S. Army War College's Eisenhower Series College Program is an answer to former President Dwight Eisenhower's effort to engage the national security community in a broad dialogue on national security priorities. It is an outreach program whose members are selected for their experience, interest and knowledge in the domain of national security.

The U.S. Army War College is the highest level of graduate education offered by the military services, and currently has some 340 students. They are mostly senior officers of all the military services - with students from over 40 foreign countries - and others who are senior civilian professionals from various government agencies.

This month in military history:

The Doolittle Raid on Japan



Dept. of the U.S. Navy photo

By Master Sgt. Michael Drake
Joint Task Force VISTA

It was a dark time for America and its allies in early 1942. The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor had inflicted heavy damage on the U.S. Pacific Fleet as well as on the morale of the American people. Enemy U-boats were decimating the British fleet, including her best warships, Repulse and Prince of Wales, and were sinking other Allied ships with horrific regularity. The American Far East Air Corps had been destroyed, despite advance warning. Guam, heroically defended by 700 U.S. Marines had been overrun by a force of 6,000 Japanese in just two days. Tiny Wake Island, defended by just 400 held out for fifteen days, before falling. Hong Kong fell on

Christmas Day; a week later Manila. Seventy-five thousand American and British troops were in retreat to Bataan, which would ultimately turn into a death march to Japanese internment, thousands dying along the way. Singapore was under siege and would fall with its 70,000-man garrison in mid-February. General Stillwell, cut off in Burma, would make a forced retreat to India. The Allied force dispatched to counter the Japanese invasion of Java, critical for its oil, had been destroyed - again with another 100,000 prisoners force-marched to concentration camps.

America and her allies needed a decisive victory, something, anything, to lift fallen spirits. Captain Francis Lowe, a Naval submarine officer,

had seen the outline of a carrier deck painted on an airfield. He and Captain Donald Duncan proposed a daring plan to strike back at the Japanese.

Aircraft carriers would sail to within 500 miles of Japan (just outside of the patrol perimeter), then launch specially modified B-25B Mitchell medium bombers at night, each carrying four 500-pound bombs (three explosive and one incendiary) to attack the Japanese home islands. Because a return flight and carrier landing would be out of the question, the planes - with just enough fuel remaining - would continue southwest over the Yellow Sea and land in daylight at air bases in unoccupied China.

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SRP (cont'd from pg.6)

who received a pass are now ready for deployment."

The decision to conduct SRP in San Diego did not come easily. It took several site visits by the Deputy State Surgeon and Mobilization officials before the green light was given for this SRP. However, that choice came as a great relief to the Soldiers because, according to previous National Guard Bureau (NGB) directives, they would have to go off OPERATION JUMP START orders before they could report for SRP at Camp Roberts on orders originating from their home units.

Sgt. 1st Class Frank Hatcher, Medical Coordinator for Patient Administration at TF Phoenix, said he was pleased with the solution, though they had to work very long hours to meet the required standards. "We worked till almost midnight on the first day," he said. "We needed little help from State or from the 40th ID because most of them were either already at Camp Roberts, or at Building 116 [the JTFV Administrative building] assisting with admin and finance SRP."

As for the Soldiers who went through SRP, most seemed satisfied with the experience simply because going through SRP close to their duty

posts protected their job security, until they officially deploy overseas.

Sgt. Ezequiel Velazquez, a Remote Video Surveillance System (RVSS) camera operator with TF San Diego in Chula Vista, was one of the Soldiers who benefited from the local SRP solution, though he had some criticisms against the process: "The process started well and was moving fine, but it was slow and a little messed up towards the end," he said. "Things were actually much faster, almost like Regular Army, when I went through SRP the first time here to join the border mission."

Overall, Sgt. Velazquez and a few other Soldiers, who talked to "The Vista," thought that the administrative portion of their SRP was well organized, while the medical process was slowed down at the end because there were only two doctors to conduct the medical interviews. "But it was still much better than if we had to go all the way to Camp Roberts!" Sgt. Velazquez added.



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Nfor Barthson

Homeland Defense official visits JTF VISTA

By Staff Sgt. Nfor Julio Barthson
Joint Task Force VISTA

The Southwest border mission in California has been attracting distinguished visitors since it was launched last year but, recently, there has been a steady inflow of high ranking officials from the U.S. government. Dr. Steven Bucci, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, is one of the highest administrative officials so far to have visited Joint Task Force VISTA for an official tour of its area of operations.

Dr. Bucci and his delegation landed in San Diego on Thursday, May 3, accompanied by Maj. Gen. Daniel Long, principal assistant to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau on Infrastructure Development and Southwest Border issues. The group was treated to a mission overview brief and a tour of the San Diego sector by JTFV Commander, Col. Nate Reddicks, and his staff. Dr. Bucci and Maj. Gen. Long asked lots of questions during the briefings they received, all intended to gather as much information as possible about what has been accomplished since the launch of OPERATION JUMP START.



Photo by Army Sgt. Kenneth Bince

Dr. Steven Bucci stops by an EIT site to talk with a soldier on duty. "The Guard has done a great job," he said.

At the end of the visit, Dr. Bucci summarized the objectives of his trip in an interview with JTF VISTA Public Affairs: "We visited all four states to see what progress has been made at the border to protect our country," he said. "This visit will allow me to be more articulate and more accurate as an advocate for the mission. The Guard is critical to the mission and has done a fantastic job," he added.

JTF Vista conducts Family Readiness Training

By Master Sgt. Michael Drake
Joint Task Force VISTA

Family Readiness is a crucial element of a Soldier's and Airman's well-being and for overall mission success. It is a support system to families and loved ones to help them cope with the military member's absence whether on short-term or long-term deployments. Operated for the most part by dedicated volunteers, it provides invaluable resources, information and services to family members.

To better inform all members of how family readiness programs work, and the importance to mission success, JTF Vista has begun a series of educational workshops. The first one, attended by commanders and senior leadership, was held during the latter part of April at the National City Armory.

"We're training senior command in family readiness and what it all means, and to get a better understanding so we can all work together," said Suzanne Moles, JTF Vista volunteer coordinator. "The whole idea is that you're on a mission; and we're here to support you.

Command support is a critical element in a successful family readiness program, as emphasized by Colonel Nate Reddicks, JTF Vista commander, as he welcomed the family readiness volunteers during the first day of workshops.



"It stresses the point it's the commander's program, and that it trickles down from there," said deputy commander, Lt. Col. Gregory Clark. "To have an effective program, it starts with the commander and his support of it.

"I think it's effective in promoting the Soldier's ability to perform his mission because he's less distracted by a problem from home if there's an active family support and family readiness program. Also, I think just in terms of overall support for the Guard, it improves readiness for the Soldier whether he's on this mission, a traditional M-dayer or deployed," said Clark.

Family Readiness is not only essential for the Soldier's and Airman's peace of mind, it helps the family better understand the workings of the military and the often lengthy deployments.

"It's the key to help the family understand

JTF Vista staff engage in Family Readiness Training with Family Readiness Support Staff: Suzanne Moles, Judy Shannon, and Bonnie Bogges.



Photos by Army 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela

how the military works," according to Command Sergeant Major, Jose Gomez. "Family Readiness is like the key element that bonds the whole package together and helps with the retention as well as the long life of that Soldier being in the military," said CSM Gomez. "Family Readiness is our guideline from our commanders and from our leadership to push down to our Soldiers so they have a clear understanding of how it affects their family when they go on deployment, and what is essential for them."

For more information on Family Readiness programs within Joint Task Force Vista, contact SSgt. Alberto Gonzalez at (619) 666-6800, or by email at Alberto.Gonzalez4@us.army.

The Doolittle Raid on Japan

(cont'd from pg.6)

It was outlandish in its audacity, would require highly skilled aviators to embark on what could surely be called a suicide mission, would endanger two critically needed aircraft carriers and other support ships, and yet would inflict little physical damage on the enemy; but it may be the psychological boost America needed. Roosevelt agreed. U.S. Fleet commander, Admiral Ernest J. King and Army Air Corps General Hap Arnold tasked Lt. Col. James "Jimmy" Doolittle with the mission.

Hand-picked crews practiced short take offs until they could be airborne in 500 feet. The bombers were modified with additional fuel tanks for the long flight. With weight a critical consideration, machine guns in the tail section were replaced with broom sticks to dissuade any enemy aircraft approaching from the rear.

The mission was cloaked in so much secrecy that even the Hornet's commanding officer, Captain Marc Mitscher, did not know of his assignment until just before sixteen B-25 Mitchell Bombers were being loaded on the flight deck. Because non-folding wings made it impossible to stow them below, the bombers were secured in two rows in the order they would take off. Because he would be first off the deck, Lt. Col. Doolittle would have the shortest runway.

On April 2, the USS Hornet, with cruiser and destroyer escort, put to sea from San Francisco, to be met two weeks later in mid-ocean by the USS Enterprise, sent to provide air cover near Japanese waters. After refueling on April 17, Hornet and Enterprise and four cruisers left their escort destroyers and tankers behind to speed westward toward Japan.

However early on April 18, several hours short of the planned take-off and still some 670 miles from Japan, the carrier group was spotted by a Japanese patrol boat which was promptly sunk, but not before it had radioed in coordinates. The planes would have to take off immediately. Launched with the timed upheaval of the ship in heavy seas and against a 40mph headwind, Task Force 16 began its historic mission toward Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya and Kobe. Flying at treetop level, they climbed to 1500 feet as they approached their targets, and encountering no air defenses or anti-aircraft fire (despite portrayals in a recent movie) they dropped their bombs. Ironically, Tokyo was in the middle of a practice air raid drill.

Fuel was now critical. The planned landings deep inside China would be impossible. One crew diverted to Vladivostok and landed safely (the only plane to do so) where their plane was confiscated and the crew interred by then-neutral Soviets. They ultimately escaped through Iran in 1943. The other fifteen planes continued on toward China. Now flying in darkness, with fuel running out, four aircraft crashed landed or ditched at sea. The other eleven crews bailed out. Three were killed, but most were rescued



Dept. of the U.S. Navy photo

by local Chinese who later paid a heavy price for their efforts to vengeful Japanese. Two crew members were killed when their bomber crashed off the coast of China; the remaining eight were captured by the Japanese and held in Shanghai. Ten days later, pilot Lt. William Farrow, pilot Lt. Dean Hallmark, and gunner Sgt Harold Spatz were given a mock trial. The next day they were taken by truck to Public Cemetery No. 1 outside Shanghai and shot. The remaining five were tortured and starved until they were freed - except for Lt. Robert Meder who died in captivity - by American troops in August 1945.

Because he had lost 16 bombers along with several crewmembers, and had inflicted little material damage on Japan, Doolittle initially deemed the raid a failure and expected to be court-martialed upon his return stateside. Instead, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Roosevelt and promoted to brigadier general (skipping the rank of colonel). The daring raid had had an electrifying effect on American morale. It also demonstrated to the Japanese that their home islands, and the very safety of their emperor, was threatened. They mistakenly believed the Americans had developed a new very long-range bomber. They were also perplexed as to where the bombers had taken off from. President Roosevelt facetiously said they had taken off from a secret base at Shangri-La, James Hilton's mythical Himalayan paradise in Lost Horizon.

The raid had strategic consequences that would mark the beginning of the end for Japan. Four fighter squadrons would be recalled from foreign service to protect the skies over Tokyo and other Japanese cities - aircraft that ultimately would be needed elsewhere. The Japanese high command also dispatched the most powerful naval armada in its history - eight carriers and eleven battleships - to finally destroy the American carrier fleet at a place called Midway. There, however, because the Japanese codes had been broken, the Americans would be waiting.

Postscript:

Almost each year since 1947, surviving members of the Doolittle Raiders - one of the military's most exclusive fraternities - have come together for a reunion. A set of 80 specially engraved silver goblets, one for each member with his name inscribed on both sides (inscribed upside down on the back), is retrieved from the National Museum of the United States Air Force by academy cadets. The most solemn moment is the Goblet Ceremony where, in private, members conduct a roll call. When a raider has died during the past year and no longer answers the call, his goblet is turned upside down - the name now still legible - and the surviving members salute their departed comrades with a toast. When only two members shall remain, a vintage bottle of Hennessy cognac that has been in the collection since 1960 will be opened and the two will drink one final toast.

This past March retired Lt. Col. Chase Nielsen, one of the Doolittle Raiders, died at his home in Brigham City, Utah. As a young lieutenant in April 1942, he was the navigator for flight crew number six. Later in his illustrious career as a member of the Strategic Air Command - the first group to be trained for atomic warfare - he was instrumental in the development of several operational innovations that include radar navigational bombardment, air refueling, and electronic countermeasures, as well as the "fail safe" procedures. This year, Lt. Nielsen's name was read and his goblet turned upside down.

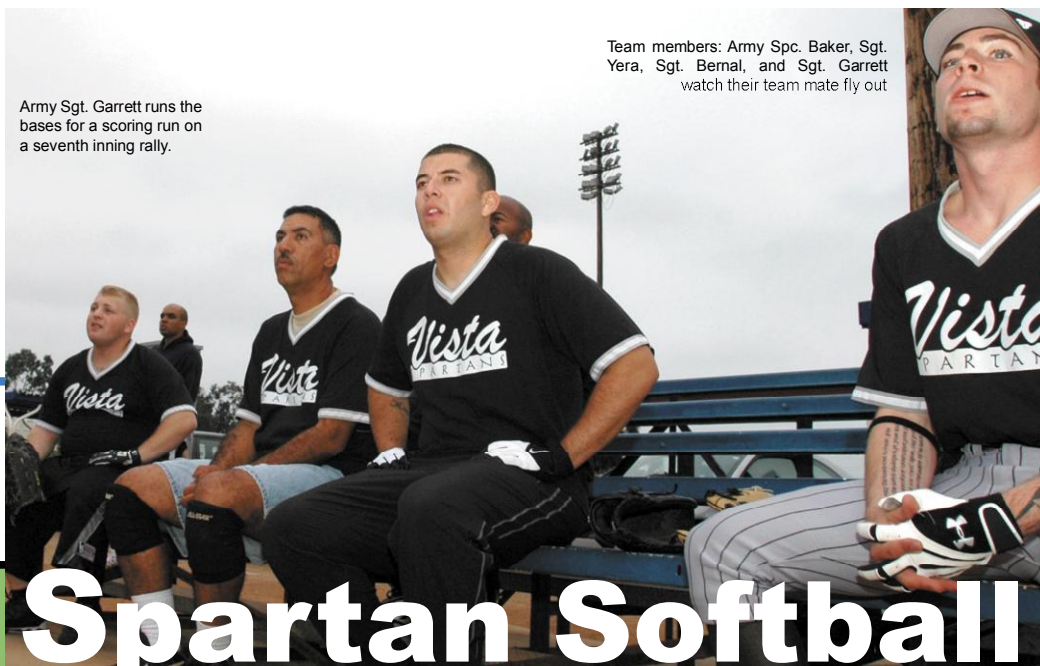
At last year's ceremony, Lt. Nielsen is reported to have said, "I hope and pray that our young men and young women who are serving in the service today will be protected; that they will live their lives in accordance with the military rules and laws of war, that they will do their best and that they will appreciate their country and protect their flag as we tried to do ourselves."

Of the eighty who struck a blow for freedom in April 1942, just fourteen remain.



Army Sgt. Garrett runs the bases for a scoring run on a seventh inning rally.

Team members: Army Spc. Baker, Sgt. Yera, Sgt. Bernal, and Sgt. Garrett watch their team mate fly out



MWR: Spartan Softball

Photo by Army 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela



Army Sgt. Yera "on the ready" playing first base.

SrA. Riggs attempting to double play the runner going to first base with her tag at second base.



By 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela
Joint Task Force VISTA



Army Sgt. Diaz making a tag at third base.

In the last inning of this game against Team US Coast Guard Hamilton and JTF Vista's very own Team Vista Spartans, coached by CW03 Judson, the Spartans were down by five points. The score was 14 - 9. The Spartans realized that Team Hamilton still had one more chance at bat.

In this game, on this day, anything could have happened, but losing was not on the list of options. Now on their fourth game of the season, the two teams were tied in record, 0 - 3. Both the Spartans and Hamilton had yet to win one game. Each hoped that today would end in their favor.

However, like in any slow pitch softball league at the 32nd St. Naval Base MWR league, anything was possible, and after one out, a stolen base from a surprise single placed the Spartans in scoring position. Another single and a fly out made the bases loaded. A switch in pinch runners brought some golden diamond game drama with a rally that tied the game 14-14, with the Spartans exploiting a few errors in play and judgement by their Coast Guard rivalry.

With no chance of winning, the rest of the game ended in frantic and dazzling defense, keeping Team Hamilton one step

from home plate. The Hamiltons even went as far as switching to a designated hitter with one female player electing to step down for their clean up "ringer." The sneaky last attempt did not impress the game umpire. A strike out and two fly outs resulted with no win or loss, but each team went home satisfied with their first tie game.

Hamilton coach, Ensign Karen Love, praised the Spartans for being "their first competition." Spartans agreed.

In this game, no one was a loser.

Watching for a weakness is CW03 Judson, the coach.



What's your favorite thing about Spring?

TROOPTALK



Sgt. Gilbert Baptist

(TFSD - Chula Vista Security)

"Spring brings the time change. It's the best of the four seasons. You get to see the sun a little bit longer. And, best of all: the baseball season starts in April, so I get to enjoy the Padres' games."



Staff Sgt. Matthew McGee
(TFSD Chaplain's Assistant)

"Things coming back to life, warmer weather and Easter..."



Sgt. 1st Class Steve Nunez
(TFSD S3/Training)

"Beach weather! Surfing time!"



Sgt. Nick Love Diaz
(TF Phoenix Field Medic)

"Spring is about beautiful sunny afternoons, good times with family and friends, as well as enjoying the awesome outdoor festivities."



SPC Linda Kaing
(TFSD S1 - Admin)

"The perfect weather for any outfit!!!"



PFC Jeremy Steele
(TF El Centro Medic)

"The best thing about spring is the fact that there's more time to go to the beach and get some sun."



Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Larson
(J1 - Admin)

"My favorite part of spring is being able to enjoy the beautiful weather with my little one!"



Sgt. Claudia Alvarez
(J8 - Finance)

"Flowers blooming... Tanning out... Time to get in shape... No more sweaters or jackets!"



Staff Sgt. Choate Kent
(J4 - Logistics)

"Summer is near. It's time for fishing and feeling the warmth of the sun."



Photos by Army Staff Sgt. Nfor Barthson & 1st Lt. Antonio Maristela

Take Care of your troops' finances

By Staff Sgt. Nfor Julio Barthson
Joint Task Force VISTA

JTF VISTA personnel of the J-8 (Budget and Finance) section recently reported that they had come across two Soldiers, both of them E-5, who had not filed any travel vouchers for over 8 months. According to an email circulated by Sgt. 1st Class Connie Andes, JTF VISTA Budget NCOIC, one of the Soldiers had simply given up filing any more travel vouchers after facing difficulties the first time, and was reluctant to try again until he found free time and someone willing to help him.

The J-8 is, therefore, calling on all NCOs, especially

those in leadership positions, to ensure that all troops under their responsibility remember to file travel vouchers monthly, preferably on the anniversary date of their active duty orders.

"If you know that your soldier has a problem with his/her pay (military pay or travel pay), please send them straight to us so we can fix the problem," Sgt. 1st Class Andes requested in her email. "Please ask your soldiers every now and then if they filed their monthly travel voucher or if they have a pay problem; it only takes 2 seconds."